

REMARKS

Claims 1-6, 8-9, 13, 15, 18 and 22-23 are currently pending in the present application, following withdrawal of claims 10-12, 14, 16-17, 19-21 and 24-25 from consideration as a consequence of the Restriction/Election Requirement of December 12, 2003.

In order to advance this application to allowance, the Applicants are requesting amendment of the pending claims to incorporate the limitations of allowable claims 13 and 22 into their respective independent claims, claims 1 and 18. Claims 13 and 22 would be canceled accordingly, without prejudice to the subject matter therein. These amendments would result in claims 1-6, 8-9, 15, 18 and 23 being in allowable form.

CONCLUSION

The Applicants respectfully request entry of the requested amendments and issuance of a Notice of Allowance for claims 1-6, 8-9, 15, 18 and 23.

If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit

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PATENT

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Respectfully submitted,

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